

My Life Change Journey – Jon Stanton



My lifestyle change story begins in August, 2007. I have been heavy my entire life. I was always the “stocky” kid in elementary school, and by the time I graduated high school, I was well on my way to 300 pounds. The weight kept increasing, and by August, 2007 I tipped the scales at nearly 430 pounds.

By that time, my weight had started to have a significant negative impact on my healthy. I was constantly tired, short of breath, would break into cold sweats. My whole body ached – especially my joints – and my lower legs were turning dark blue because of poor circulation. When my hair started falling out and I started feeling strange flutters in my chest, I decided I needed to pay the doctor a visit. I was already taking medications for high blood pressure and I thought my thyroid was out of whack.

Well, the blood work came back, and I was definitely out of whack. It wasn't my thyroid, though, it was my blood sugar. My A1C rating was 8.2; 7 and below is considered normal. The doctor wanted to put me on oral diabetic medications. However, it is what he said that changed my life for the better.

Many of the weight loss stories I read involved some sort of “turning point” or “wake-up call.” My doctor looked me in the eye and said, ***“If you continue to follow the same lifestyle, you will be dead by the time you are 50, and the last 10 years of your existence will be miserable. However, if you make changes now, you can enjoy a long and happy life.”***

I asked him to give me a chance before we started medicine. I immediately began exercising and changing my diet. I eliminated most sweets and desserts, ate more fruits and vegetables, adopted a mostly “organic” diet, and began a walking program. The first few weeks were hell. My legs hurt, I thought I was going to keel over at any minute, and I struggled with what I ate. I refused to give up, however, and have continued to make forward progress.

As of this writing, approximately 8 months later, I am down to 295 pounds. I never needed diabetic medication because my sugar returned to normal within three months, and now registers on the low side. I have cut back my blood pressure medication, and anticipate discontinuing it this summer. I walk an average of 3-5 miles per day, have more energy than I can remember having in years, and feel great! My goal weight is 180 pounds, so I still have a long road ahead of me, but I know now that it is possible.

MY LIFESTYLE CHANGE: People ask me all the time how I did it. Did I have surgery, did I join a medical weight loss group, did I buy a gym membership. No, no and no. I changed my lifestyle – pure and simple. I enjoy food and I enjoy eating, but I can enjoy it

without letting it destroy me. For exercise, I walked – that’s it. Nothing fancy! I started out walking about 500 feet. I slowly built up distance until I reached my current average of 3-5 miles daily. I may add jogging or running in the future as the weight continues to come off and my knees can take the added pressure. But, WALKING WORKS! I am a HUGE advocate of walking.

WALKING WORKS! We are fortunate to have several great walking places and programs available in Michigan. My favorite is the “Walking Works” through Blue Cross Blue Shield. I faithfully read a blog at www.walkytalk.com every day for inspiration from Jodi Davis – another Michigan resident who changed her life through walking. Her insights help keep me motivated and the ability to dialogue with others making similar lifestyle changes helps keep me accountable. I also participate in activities in the Lansing area when possible, such as Community Partners in Health.

MY 2.5 MILE WALK ROUTE PLUS: I am also fortunate to work in downtown Lansing, which is perfect for walking during the workday. I made arrangements with my boss to eat lunch at my desk, and around 2pm I take off for a walk. My favorite loop circles the Capitol, proceeds down the boulevard between state office buildings to the Hall of Justice, circles the Hall of Justice, and returns the same way ending at my office building at the corner of Allegan and Grand. This totals about 2.5 miles. I walk in the evenings at home, and on the weekends, I enjoy the beauty of our state by walking in several of the nature areas or state parks nearby.

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO RETURN TO MY “FORMER” LIFE. I don’t miss most of the garbage I used to eat, and I certainly don’t miss how awful I felt. Being physically healthy improves my emotional and spiritual health as well. The disciplines I have implemented carry over in to other areas of my life that are also beneficial. I never believed I had a problem, and I thought I was invincible. I also thought I would never be able to change my lifestyle. It is possible, and it doesn’t require expensive surgeries or diet plans.

WALKING WORKS – I’m living proof!